

DRESSER PLANT EXPLOSION

3 Painters

T.H. Fires

Are Injured;

T.H. Trib. 7/18/63

All Critical

T 7-14-63
An explosion and fire about 9:45 a.m. Thursday in the basement of the Dresser Power Plant, five miles south of Terre Haute on the west side of the Wabash River, sent three men to St. Anthony Hospital.

According to the Vigo County Sheriff's Office, the injured men were:

TED McMAHEL of Indianapolis.

GENE DEARBORN of English.

AVEN EASTRIDGE of English.

According to an early report, all three were listed in critical condition at St. Anthony Hospital. The state police reported that Dearborn and McMahel were in the poorest condition and said they understood that

Dearborn was not expected to live. They were painting a tank when the blast occurred.

The Public Service Company of Indiana operates the Dresser plant, which is a generating plant for electricity.

Walter T. Christie, local plant superintendent, said a "complete and thorough investigation will be made," but said he knew little about the accident and could give few details.

Plant superintendent Christie declined to co-operate with news media in covering the blast but a call to PSC officials at Plainfield brought full co-operation.

A TRIBUNE cameraman was refused entrance to the explosion area and a WTHI-TV cameraman was ordered out of the area by Christie under threat of being carried out bodily. The television lensman left voluntarily.

A Public Service spokesman in Plainfield said the three injured men were all employees of the Cook and Glass Company of Indianapolis which was contracted for routine painting maintenance at the plant.

He said the injured men were painting a 10,000-gallon water storage tank used in the boiler condenser cycle when the blast

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occurred. The tank was empty at the time.

The three men were said to be inside the tank.

The cause of the blast and brief fire that followed was not immediately known, he said, but it was theorized that fumes from the paint were ignited by a spark.

There was no equipment loss and no effect to electrical service in the area. Superintendent

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